

Pentecost 4 7/7/19  
Luke 10:1-20 C

*“WHATEVER HOUSE YOU ENTER, FIRST SAY, ‘PEACE BE TO THIS HOUSE!’”*

I have to commend the city of Hazen for their “Hometown Heroes” display. Banners have been hung to honor the community’s military veterans and those still wearing the uniform. I’m guessing that you know a few of the individuals on those on those banners, because they are your friends and family. Like MG Al Joersz, the fastest man on earth, who once flew an aircraft 2,193 mph. Just kiddy corner from our sister congregation of St. Matthew’s, on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, is my friend, Rocky, LTC Rockne Bonsness, United States Marine Corps. And if you happen to be driving towards the high school on 7<sup>th</sup> street, you will see the banner paying homage to Bronze Star recipient, SGT Kent Larson.

I like those standards of service. They are a reminder to us of why we can spend our 4<sup>th</sup> of July watching baseball, golfing, boating, barbecuing; enjoying the company of family, friends, and fireworks.

Those banners are a living witness that we, because of the sacrificial service of those on those banners, can live in peace. And that peace that we are privileged to live in is a reflection of the peace that we live in in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In our Gospel, Jesus sends out the 72 with the simple, straight-forward mission, “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’” This peace is the Gospel itself, and the Church exists to make that peace known to a world dying in sin.

“Peace be to this house!” This is the peace the world cannot give. It is the removal of hostility and hatred between God and us. We are born

enemies of God, breaking His commandments in thought, word, and deed. We are lost and condemned in our sin. And because of that, we can do nothing to save ourselves.

So, Jesus bring us peace. This is the promised peace of Isaiah 66, “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river.” This peace is Christ Himself, for Christ is our long-awaited peace. Remember the song of the angels to shepherds outside Bethlehem the night of His birth? “Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Lk 2). Peace is on earth that night because Christ is on earth that night, cradled in the arms of Mary. Remember what Simeon sings as he holds the Word-made-flesh? “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word” (Lk 2). Simeon faces death in confidence because he holds the infant Prince of Peace in his arms. Jesus is there, so Simeon knows he can depart – die – in peace. Remember what the crowds cry out as the Savior rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest” (Lk 19)! The peace in heaven is among them, riding on a colt, on His way to Calvary to win that peace for them – and for us.

In His sacrificial service to us poor sinners, Jesus won peace with God for us. He did that by sitting in the sackcloth and ashes of our sin. He bore your sin, all the wages of your death, all your hell, as the thorns of the crown pierced His skin; the nails were driven through His hands and feet; the spear opened His side and the blood and water flow out. On Calvary’s cross, He performed His mightiest work of all. All of God’s wrath and anger against your sin was poured out on Him, as Jesus paid the price for your sin. He died, and by His innocent suffering and death, He won for you the forgiveness of all your sin.

Three days later, our Prince of Peace and Life rose from the tomb to appear in the midst of His frightened disciples. He spoke to them the words, "Peace be with you" (Jn 20). He did not rise and come to them to scold them for their abandonment, nor condemn them for their doubt. He is risen and appears to forgive them, to take away their sin, to give them peace.

And that is Good News for us, My Friends in Christ. Like those disciples that Easter evening, we are often locked in in our fears and worries, guilt and shame. But, where the Word is, there is Jesus, and where Jesus is, there is His Kingdom and His peace.

The Kingdom of God is here with us today, because Jesus is present with us in His Word. In the darkness of this valley of the shadow of death, the devil, the world, and the weakness of your own sinful flesh lead you into doubt, despair, and all manner of false belief. Those who struggle with illness, especially terminal illness, find that peace elusive. Those who are troubled and shamed over past transgressions – reminded all the more by the whispers of the Accuser -- long for that peace. Godly parents observe the events in the world today, and they hold their children a little tighter as they worry what the future holds. Peace can seem elusive as you live life under the cross.

Dear Child of God, rejoice and be glad, for the peace of God in Jesus Christ is not "out there somewhere," a "never-never land" to dream about. Jesus is with us; He is with us in His Word and where Jesus, there is peace.

In the waters of Holy Baptism, there is peace because Christ is there. There, He washes your sins away and makes you His child and heir.

There, He clothes you with Himself, with His own righteousness, so that God is pleased with you.

Christ is with us in His Word as it comes into our ears and our hearts to bring us peace, whenever and wherever that Word is preached, heard, sung. That peace is ours because Jesus is present among us to forgive sins, to comfort and cheer us.

And, the Lord is present in His Supper giving His Body and Blood to eat and to drink. Peace is ours in that eating and drinking because Christ Himself is there to forgive sins and strength to bear the cross of His own choosing.

Yes, we can rejoice that our names are written in heaven and today, we live in the peace of Christ. And yet, we must remember the multitudes who still believe the lies of the devil, who still look for joy in that which moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal. The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. So, Jesus does His work in you, so that He can do His work through you. God extends His peace in Christ Jesus to your neighbor like a river through your service.

Our Gradual for today proclaims, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news, who publish peace and bring good news of salvation..." How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news because you can serve your neighbor by giving them what this world cannot -- the peace of the Gospel of Jesus and the joy of knowing that their name is written in heaven.

And let me re-iterate something you have heard me say countless times: Your kitchen table is the greatest mission field you will ever have. No, at least not today, God has not sent you to Africa or China, but He has

sent you here in your daily vocations -- parent, grandparent, child, student, citizen, employee, employer.

When you are visiting with your neighbor who is mourning the death of a loved one or if your neighbor is terminally ill, share with them the hope of the resurrection of Jesus. If your neighbor is lonely, comfort that with the good news that Jesus is with us always, never will he leave us nor forsake us. If the woes of life have overtaken your neighbor, if the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death is indeed dark and frightening, cheer them with the peace that Jesus gives, that his world cannot give. Invite them to the worship services of God's House that they may hear and learn the Word of God, that Word that gives the peace this world cannot give. And in doing that, we are bearing one another's burdens.

The Good News for you, Dear Child of God, is that you under the "Woe" of God no more; but Blessed are you, for you live in the peace of God in Jesus Christ.